



Advent Family Curriculum

Welcome! I'm so glad you're joining us for this advent journey. My vision for this advent family resource has been to make something that is gentle, exciting, customizable, easy but deep, and authentic but not overwhelming, that invites your family to create their own precious advent traditions and to engage in meaningful conversations that create lasting memories and spark fires of curiosity that encourage you to explore God's Word together.

While the layout may seem more complicated than a simple open-and-go advent devotional book, take a moment to get your bearings and grasp the daily plan—once you do, it's not as complicated as it feels. There are a lot of optional pieces because I want to give you the freedom to adapt this to be special for your family. Do what you can this year, add a little bit more next year. Skip the days you're too busy. Read the books you can find easily. Make a new tradition to build out one of the pieces you don't have yet. And, most importantly, enjoy reflecting on God's beautiful gift together.

Supplies:

- ❖ Bible – to read the surrounding verses for context (or use the online Bible links)
- ❖ Printer & paper – for daily verse readings (or read straight from the links on your device)

Optional:

- ❖ Stuffer advent calendar – for the verse print outs and any ornaments/nativity surprises that you choose to use (or you can just reuse a simple gift bag every day, or make it a scavenger hunt)



- ❖ Your Favorite Story Bible(s). This curriculum suggests specific chapters from the following Bibles, but you could use whatever one you already have.
 - *The Kingdom of God Bible Storybook* by Tyler Van Halteren
 - The Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd-Jones
- ❖ Picture Books – We recommend specific books to guide children in reflecting on elements of the curriculum content. (See recommendations in the curriculum. Get what you’re interested in or want. No need to get them all! See note on finding books below.)
- ❖ Child-safe nativity set – (If you do not have one, consider making a simple one out of peg dolls or felt and inviting your children to help.)
- ❖ Heirloom ornaments with various themes – (Only if you want a surprise for every day)
- ❖ Various craft and activity supplies – there are some crafts and activities suggested throughout the curriculum

How to use this guide:

This curriculum is structured around a daily verse reading. The first 10 days walk through Old Testament prophecies that point to the Messiah and the next 15 days walk through elements of the Christmas story in Luke, Matthew, and John. Each day has a Bible verse, big idea, reflection questions, and a suggested Bible story or picture book to consider reading. Sprinkled throughout are also resources for further study and some activity and craft prompts.

There are many ways to implement this curriculum:

- ❖ **Simple:** Simply read the verse and reflect on it as a family.
- ❖ **Deeper Reading:** Read the verse and then go to the Bible and read the surrounding verses/chapters to gain extra context on the verse.
- ❖ **Reflection:** We provide reflection questions to encourage discussion of the verse and surrounding content.
- ❖ **Books:** We suggest daily Story Bible chapters and/or picture books to engage more deeply with the content in a kid-friendly and fun way.
- ❖ **Celebrate:** We suggest ornaments and nativity scene pieces to reveal daily as a fun surprise for the family. Think of easy creative ways to make this fun—a treasure hunt, gift bag, or advent calendar with pockets or drawers are all fun options.
 - **Hang the ornaments on your tree as “secret” reminder’s of God’s promises**



- ***Each day, set up the nativity pieces to recreate that day's part of the story of Christ's birth.***
- ❖ **Activities:** Some days offer suggested crafts or activities to reflect further on the big idea of that day.
- ❖ We have also created a [Spotify playlist](#) that aligns with the themes in this guide for you to enjoy during this season.

To set this up for your family:

Note: you can simply access this file on your phone and never print or acquire anything. However, if you do want to use the other resource suggestions, you will want to do the following to prepare:

1. *Print the daily verse cards, cut them out, and find something to stuff them in (envelopes hung on a string, an advent calendar with pockets or drawers, etc.)*
2. *Find the books you want to use. (see note below on finding books.)*
3. *Find/make/collect heirloom ornaments and a kid-friendly nativity scene that align with the theme that you can reveal daily for fun (consider ways to hide them for the kids to hunt for such as a simple treasure hunt or in a box full of confetti)*












Note on finding and purchasing books: If you do not want to purchase all of these books, there are many options:

- *Use the linked read alouds of the available books on YouTube.*
- *Use the Christmas chapters from Storybook Bibles you already own.*
- *Check your local library and church library for these books or similar ones you could swap in.*
- *Shop used bookstores, including online stores like AbeBooks and Thriftbooks to find affordable prices and out of print books.*
- *Pick a few longer Christmas books and read one chapter a night. Here's a few to consider: One Wintry Night by Ruth Bell Graham, The Very First Christmas by Paul L. Maier.*











Notes:

- *When resources are available online, the link is given as a QR code. If viewing digitally, the QR code is also a direct link.*
- *"For further reading" content is resources such as sermons and articles for adults and older children to reflect deeper on the ideas.*














Day	Element	Big Idea	Bible Verse	Surprise
Prophecy				
1.	Light is coming	The dark world needs rescuing.	Isaiah 9:2	Light-themed ornament such as a lantern
	<i>The Lightlings</i> by RC Sproul			
	<p><i>Why do you think Isaiah said the people walked in darkness? What does the great light represent?</i></p> <p><i>Bonus Idea: Consider eating dinner by candlelight tonight or making plans to do so another night during advent. During dinner talk about what it means to you that God is light.</i></p>			
	Consider making a paper lantern.			
2.	Promise to Adam & Eve	The Messiah was promised at the fall.	Genesis 3:15, 19, 21	Clothing-themed ornament
	<i>The Garden, The Curtain & The Cross</i> by Carl Laferton			
	<p><i>God punished Adam & Eve for their sin, but he also took care of them—He gave them clothes. Right away at the very beginning of sin, His love for them was evident. What does this teach us about God?</i></p>			
3.	Promise to Abraham	God promises to bless the world through Abraham.	Genesis 22:17-18	Sand- or stars- themed ornament
	<p><i>Story Bible – Abraham sacrifices Isaac story</i></p> <p><i>The Kingdom of God Bible Storybook Ch. 6: A Kingdom of Faith</i> <i>(OR Son of Laughter & The Present chapters of The Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd-Jones)</i></p>			
	<p><i>What would the stars have looked like to Abraham? How do you think this promise made him feel?</i></p>			
	<p><i>Consider making a stary scene ornament. (Flick white paint onto dark paper. Maybe add a silhouetted scene in the foreground. To make it fancy, consider a way to frame it or paint it onto a wood slice. Or you could print out a picture of the milkyway and decoupage it onto clay or wood)</i></p>			
4.	Promise to Judah	The Messiah was promised to be a strong king long ago to Judah himself.	Genesis 49:10	Scepter or crown or staff ornament.
	<p><i>Story Bible – Jacob blesses his sons (or another story about Joseph rescuing his brothers)</i></p> <p><i>The Kingdom of God Bible Storybook Ch. 8: A Kingdom of Grace</i></p>			




	<i>Judah's story itself points to the story of Jesus. Look up Genesis 44:30-34 (or start in Chapter 43 for more context) and discuss how what Judah did was a reflection of what Jesus someday would do.</i>			
5.	Promise to Moses through Balaam	The Messiah was described as a star a long time ago by a prophet during the Exodus.	Numbers 24:17	Star ornament
	<i>Story Bible – Balaam and the donkey story The Kingdom of God Bible Storybook Ch. 15: The King's Blessing</i>			
	<i>Why do you think the Messiah was described as a star? What could this mean?</i>			
6.	Promise to David	God's promised Messiah became more specific.	2 Samuel 7:16	House-themed ornament
	<i>Story Bible – David wants to build God a house The Kingdom of God Bible Storybook Ch. 20: A Greater King</i>			
	<i>Do you think David was surprised by this promise? What do you think he thought it meant?</i>			
7.	Promise to Isaiah	The Messiah would redeem the line of Jesse	Isaiah 11:1	"Stump" ornament – make one out of a wood slice
	<i>Story Bible – Isaiah The Kingdom of God Bible Storybook Ch. 23: The Promised King</i>			
	<i>Why do you think it talks about the "stump" of Jesse? What is a stump? What has happened to the tree? Why is the "stump of Jesse"? Whis is this referring to?</i>			
8.	Promise to Micah	The Messiah will be our Sheperd	Micah 5:2, 4-5a	Sheep ornament
	<i>The Good Sheperd and the Stubborn Sheep by Hannah E. Harrison OR Reflect on Psalm 23 (such as with the book Found by Sally Lloyd Jones)</i>			
	<i>How does it make you feel to think about Jesus as your shepherd?</i>			
9.	Promise to Zechariah the Prophet	The Messiah is a king bringing salvation	Zechariah 9:9	Donkey ornament
	<i>Story Bible – Zechariah the Prophet The Kingdom of God Bible Storybook Ch. 28: Return to the Kingdom</i>			

















	<p><i>Zechariah was a prophet after the exile when the temple was being rebuilt. What king do you think he is describing in this prophecy? Why would he ride on a donkey? (Hint: Which is fancier and demonstrates power? A fancy horse or a small, baby donkey?)</i></p> <p><i>For Further reading, see: The King Comes on a Donkey from Ligonier Ministries</i></p>			
10.	Promise to Zechariah the Priest	The Messiah is going to visit and redeem us	Luke 1:68-69	Represent the horn of salvation with an ornament made out of cow horn
	<p><i>Jesus Came for Me by Jared Kennedy</i> OR <i>Story Bible – Elizabeth and Zechariah story</i></p>			
	<p><i>Right after John the Baptist is born, his father, Zechariah, speaks this prophecy. Most of the prophecy is about the Messiah, not his son John. Why do you think he's focusing on the Messiah instead of his new baby boy? Zechariah says that God has visited his people. How did he visit us?</i></p> <p><i>For Further reading: This sermon from John Piper reflects on the idea of the horn of salvation.</i></p>			
<p>Nativity <i>Note: There is a picture book recommended for each day in this section. However, each storybook Bible also has a delightful rendition of the Christmas story, so use those to fill any gaps you may have.</i></p>				
11.	Nativity as a way to remember	We remember the events of Jesus' birth with nativity scenes	John 1:9,14	Nativity ornament
	<p><i>Saint Francis and the Nativity by Myrna A. Strasser</i></p>			
	<p><i>John described the Messiah as a "true light coming into the world"? What do you think this means? Why do you think he chose to use this word picture?</i></p>			
	<p><i>If you don't have a nativity scene to use for this advent curriculum, consider building a simple one as a family out of peg dolls or felt.</i></p>			
12.	A messenger arrives	The Messiah's arrival starts with an angel	Luke 1:26, 28	Angel nativity piece
	<p><i>The Good News of Christmas by Rousseaux Brasseur</i></p>			
	<p><i>What are angels? Who sends them? Why did God send Gabriel to Mary? Where do you think Mary was when Gabriel came to her?</i></p>			
13.	Mary is chosen	Mary is Jesus' mother	Luke 1:30-31	Mary nativity piece
	<p><i>The Christmas Story For Children</i> <i>By Max Lucado, Randy Frazee, and Karen Davis Hill</i></p>			








	What do you think Mary was thinking when Gabriel the angel visited her?			
14.	Joseph is chosen	Joseph is Jesus' Father	Matthew 1:20-21	Joseph nativity piece
	<i>Fear Not, Joseph! By Julie Stiegemeier</i>			
	What do you think Joseph was thinking after his dream? Do you think he was excited or scared? Or maybe confused?			
15.	The journey to Bethlehem	Jesus was born in Bethlehem	Luke 2:4-5	Donkey nativity piece
	<i>The Christmas Story by Carol Heyer</i> <i>(OR The Child of Christmas by Sophie Piper would also work)</i>			
	What do you think Mary and Joseph were thinking as they traveled to Bethlehem? Do you think they talked a lot or walked silently? Do you think it was exciting or scary? Do you think they packed a bunch of stuff or just a few important things?			
16.	The surprise of a stable	There was no room for Mary and Joseph to sleep.	Luke 2:7b	Stable backdrop for nativity
	<i>The Christmas Surprise by Steph Williams</i>			
	Why do you think God allowed for Mary and Joseph to not find a room to stay in? How did God provide for them? Why do you think He choose for Jesus to be born in this unique setting? What does it teach us about Jesus?			
17.	Jesus was laid in a manger	Jesus' first bed was humble.	Luke 2:6-7a	Manger & Baby Jesus nativity piece(s)
	<i>This First Christmas Night by Laura Godwin</i>			
	What might you have heard and seen and felt if you'd been there with Mary and Joseph the night Jesus was born?			
18.	The sheep	Shepherds were the first to hear the news.	Luke 2:8	Sheep nativity piece(s)
	<i>The Little Shepherd's Christmas by Carol Heyer</i> <i>(OR JSB The Light of the Whole World chapter works well here too)</i>			
	Why do you think God chose shepherds to receive the first message of Jesus' birth? Why do you think the angels delivered their message at night?			



19.	Angels rejoice	Angels announced the new to shepherds first.	Luke 2:9-14	More angel nativity pieces (or an angel ornament)
	<i>Sounding Joy by Ellie Holcomb</i>			
	<i>What do you think the angels looked like? Or sounded like?</i>			
	<i>Consider making more angels for your nativity set (maybe with peg dolls). Or you could make angel ornaments instead—maybe even a whole host of them (maybe with diy clay or pipe cleaners & coffee filters or yarn).</i>			
20.	Shepherds witness	The shepherds go to find Jesus right away.	Luke 2:15-16	Shepherd nativity piece(s)
	<i>The Story of Christmas by Mary Joslin</i>			
	<i>Why do you think the shepherds went to Bethlehem immediately? What emotions do you think they were feeling? How would you have reacted if you had been one of the shepherds?</i>			
21.	The heavens declare His glory	A star announced the news too.	Matthew 2:1-2	Comet ornament
	<i>Song of the Stars by Sally Lloyd Jones</i>			
	<i>Many scholars have surmised that this star was likely a very bright comet. What do you think it might have looked like? Why do you think God chose to announce Jesus' arrival with not just angels, but also a star?</i>			
22.	The wisemen follow the star	The star led the wisemen to the Savior.	Matthew 2:9-10	Wisemen nativity piece(s)
	<i>The Christmas Promise by Alison Mitchell</i>			
	<i>What do you think the wisemen were thinking and feeling when they finally found baby Jesus after such a long journey?</i>			
23.	The camels	The wisemen brought gifts.	Matthew 2:11-12	Camel nativity piece(s)
	<i>The Third Gift by Linda Sue Park</i>			



	<i>Why do you think the wisemen brought gifts? Why do you think these are the gifts they choose to bring?</i>			
24.	Celebrating the gift of the Savior	We all wonder at this story too.	Luke 2:17-20	Present ornament
	<i>Saint Nicholas: The Real Story of the Christmas Legend by Julie Stiegemeyer</i>			
	<i>Jesus came to rescue you too. This is so exciting, it can feel hard to fully understand. What are ways you like to remember and celebrate the story of Christ's birth?</i>			
25.	Awaiting His return	He will come again!	Revelation 21:1-4	Presents on Christmas Day!
	<i>The Story of God with Us by Kenneth Padgett & Shay Gregorie</i>			
	<i>What do you think it will be like to live with God forever? Do you think when Jesus comes back it will be just as unexpected as the first time when he was born in a stable?</i>			

Note: For reviews of these books and more, visit our [website](https://homebibleschoolonl.wixsite.com/home): <https://homebibleschoolonl.wixsite.com/home>



1

The people who walked
in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwell in a land
of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

Isaiah 9:2

2

I will put enmity between
you and the woman,
and between your offspring
and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.

Genesis 3:15

3

I will surely bless you, and
I will surely multiply your
offspring as the stars of
heaven and as the sand that
is on the seashore. And
your offspring shall possess
the gate of his enemies, and
in your offspring shall all
the nations of the earth be
blessed, because you have
obeyed my voice."

Genesis 22:17-18

4

The scepter shall not
depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff
from between his feet,
until tribute comes to him;
and to him shall be the
obedience of the peoples.

Genesis 49:10

5

I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near:
a star shall come out of
Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise
out of Israel;
it shall crush the forehead
of Moab
and break down all
the sons of Sheth.

Numbers 24:17

6

And your house and your
kingdom shall be made
sure forever before me.
Your throne shall be
established forever.

2 Samuel 7:16

8

But you, O Bethlehem
Ephrathah,
who are too little to be
among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days...
And he shall stand and
shepherd his flock in the
strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of
the LORD his God.
And they shall dwell secure,
for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.
And he shall be their peace.

Micah 5:2, 4-5a

7

There shall come forth a
shoot from the stump
of Jesse,
and a branch from his
roots shall bear fruit.

Isaiah 11:1

10

Blessed be the Lord
God of Israel,
for he has visited
and redeemed his people
and has raised up a horn
of salvation for us
in the house of his
servant David,

Luke 1:68-69

12

In the sixth month the
angel Gabriel was sent
from God to a city of
Galilee named Nazareth,
to a virgin betrothed to a
man whose name was Joseph,
of the house of David.
And the virgin's name was
Mary. And he came to her
and said, "Greetings, O
favored one,
the Lord is with you!"

Luke 1:26-28

11

The true light, which gives
light to everyone, was
coming into the world...
And the Word became
flesh and dwelt among
us, and we have seen
his glory, glory as of
the only Son from the
Father, full of
grace and truth.

John 1:9,14

9

Rejoice greatly, O
daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O
daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king
is coming to you;
righteous and having
salvation is he,
humble and mounted
on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah 9:9

13

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

Luke 1:30-31

14

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:20-21

15

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Luke 2:4-5

16

...because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7b

17

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger...

Luke 2:6-7a

18

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luke 2:8

19

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2:9-14

23

And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Matthew 2:11-12

20

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

Luke 2:15-16

24

And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2:17-20

21

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

Matthew 2:1-2

25

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Revelation 21:1a,2-4

22

After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

Matthew 2:9-10